



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
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News Release

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Arsenic in Drinking Water Subject of Board Hearing

Wednesday, January 14, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Point Plaza East, 310 Israel Road SE, Tumwater

The Washington State Board of Health will hold a public hearing on lowering the amount of arsenic allowed in some drinking water as part of its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday in Tumwater. It will also consider adoption of the proposed 2004 State Health Report.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has lowered the federal standards for arsenic in drinking water from 50 parts per billion (ppb) to 10 ppb for water from systems that serve 25 or more people on a regular basis. The rule change being considered by the Board would bring state rules in line with the federal standards.

The State Health report is produced in even-number years. The Legislature intended that state agency administrators use it as a guide for preparing agency budgets and executive request legislation for the following biennium—in this case 2005-07. The governor must approve, modify, or disapprove the report.

The Board will also discuss its positions on issues likely to be debated during the legislative session, as well as health components of the Governor's proposed supplemental budget, the Medicaid strategic plan, and a proposal to include funding for early learning programs (which typically have a student health component) as part of a possible sales tax increase that would fund education. The Board will also receive updates on efforts to rewrite the state food code and to improve environmental health conditions in schools.

Copies of the agenda and related materials are available by contacting the Board of Health at (360) 236-4110 or by visiting the Board's Web site at www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/.

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The State Board of Health serves the citizens of Washington by working to understand and prevent disease across the entire population. Established in 1889 by the State Constitution, the Board provides leadership by suggesting public health policies and actions, by regulating certain activities, and by providing a public forum. The governor appoints ten members who fill three-year terms. Visit the board's Web site at www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/.